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Hygiene

Unless subject to taboos, both sexes bathe at least once a day, the younger people twice or three times. If all the residents are assembled during the vų'tę' period, the younger generation take their first bath jointly before sunrise as soon as the youths' and maidens' dance in the plaza abruptly comes to a stop. At that moment all dash toward the brook, including the girls, who have quickly fetched their gourd bottles. Men and women of mature age are also in the habit of joining, but those really old rarely come, if at all. The girls go directly upstream, take up a position counter to the current, and fill their vessels, everyone laughing and splashing about. At this early hour the air is piercing cold on the steppe, and precisely before sunrise a gust of wind is likely to make the bathers shiver as they get out of their bath. In order to get warm everybody rushes up the slope toward the village. But the members of whatever festive organizations happen to be functioning assemble halfway to the settlement around fires, for which they have already brought along dry palm grass. Only after having warmed themselves they run shouting, each society separately, into the village, where each occupies its appropriate site in the plaza.

During the day they generally bathe again, performing their ablutions by rubbing themselves with their hands or with leaves. After nightfall they avoid entering the water. The hair, as noted, is washed by rubbing it between the palms. Notwithstanding their efforts the skin rarely appears wholly clean, for it usually retains remnants of old body paint, feathers glued on, and the like—the sort of things regarded as dirt by civilized people. Babies at the breast are the cleanest part of the population, for they are washed without delay as soon as they are dirty.

The oral cavity is cleansed with the index and middle fingers and rinsed with sand. They never clean their fingernails.

When at most three years old the Rąmkõ'kamekra boys and girls know how to swim and dive. I observed that the Krahõ', Kre'pų'mkateye, and the Timbira of Araparytíua were all good swimmers, and the same has been reported of the Põrekamekra.[200] On the other hand, I had a different impression of the Krĩkati, who do not live along running watercourses and of whom I suspect at least some are unable to swim. At all events they manifested a striking repugnance to deep water, as I noted repeatedly when they accompanied me from their village to Porto Franco on the Tocantins. At the Ribeirão da Aldea, whose wooded bank was somewhat more than knee-deep under water, while in midstream the water of the brook did not extend beyond my saddle, these Indians cut off sticks to take soundings ahead of them, and I had long reached the opposite bank when I still heard them splashing behind me and excitedly shouting at one another. They talked of the Ribeirão dos Arraias, which is 20 m. wide and 1½ deep, as though it were an insurmountable obstacle; and the successful crossing took an eternity, for each of the women had to be led across by two men. Still more amusing was the passage of the shallow, but swift streamlet known as Lageado in a canoe belonging to a Neobrazilian. At first no one ventured to step into it, and when the first hero hesitantly and diffidently succumbed to my mockery, his wife kept singing in a booming voice on the bank till she saw him safely on land.

The dwellings are in general tolerably cleanly. Every self-respecting woman will sweep her house and the space before it at least once a day—even several times if the offals after a meal require it. The brooms are made of the inflorescence of the assahy (*Euterpe* sp.) or the bacaba palm (*Oenocarpus* sp.), or a bundle of mallow

[200] Pohl, Reise, 2:200 f.

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Ge 515

T 356 412

twigs tied together. Garbage is accumulated on the firefan or an old mat and carried to the border of the steppe, to the rear of the house. However, there are women who are not particular about a little dirt more or less, and who will leave the rinds of fruits and gnawed bones lying about all day long.

T 356 751

The domestic vermin include crickets, cockroaches, small ants, and jiggers. The first two are simply put up with. As for ant nests, the Indians try to destroy them with hot water; and as soon as they become aware of jiggers, they periodically pour water on the floor, which they stamp on till it grows firm. Those which have penetrated the skin are removed with a bone needle—for which at present an iron one may be substituted.

T 264 515

All utensils are rather dirty, for it never occurs to them to clean objects before storage. The clothing that is obligatory on visits to Barra do Corda is subsequently stowed away for one's own or another's future use without attention to the accumulated dirt and perspiration. Dishes are never washed after use, though this is done before again using them. Storage bags and sleeping mats are often filthy, though the latter are washed when the dirt grows too offensive.

T 514

The Indians go to stool in the steppe or in the mallow bushes to the rear of their houses, at an adequate distance. They clean themselves with kerneled maize cobs or with two little sticks broken off on the way. The feces of infants in the house or on the space before it are at once strewn with sand and removed.

T [828]

The Canella are very sensitive as to evil smells, though they do not always perceive the same things as stench as civilized people. As noted, they regard as pleasant the odor of urucú, from which Neobrazilians recoil, and they are strangely indifferent to the odor of the skunk (*Mephitis suffocans*), which to my nostrils is the most horrible to be found in the Timbira country. However, excrements and putrefying matter are intolerable to them and are removed posthaste.

T 827 516

Breaking wind is considered indecorous indoors, but rather a pleasure on the steppe or in the plaza among the younger generation. Indeed, young girls sometimes vie with one another in this respect and try to enhance the effect by hitting their own buttocks with their clenched fists. However, this happens only among themselves, never in the presence of older people.

G T 177 241 114

Farming

It is erroneous to picture the Gê generically as hunters and gatherers, with at best an occasional group adopting a little cultivation under Tupí influence.[139] Actually, not a single Akwẽ or Timbira-Kayapó tribe failed to farm; and as to the latter, at least, I am convinced that they learnt nothing from the Tupí about agriculture. Old travelers sometimes decree that such and such a tribe lived "only by hunting" or even "by robbery only." Thus, Saint-Adolphe alleges that the Apinayé had grown accustomed to a vegetable diet only through the plantations made by the military colony of São João de Araguaya (founded in 1797). He overlooked the passage in which Villa Real—four years prior to the establishment of that colony—urged a treaty of peace with the Apinayé on the ground of their cultivating manioc on a large scale.[140]

T 241 177 114

Following Ribeiro and Pohl, Snethlage states that the Timbira when first in contact with civilization already practiced a well-defined system of tillage and rightly surmises that the four species listed by Ribeiro do not exhaust the number of their crops. At present the Rąmkõ'kamekra plant the following species, which shall be

[139] For a typical expression of this view see Schmidt, Kulturkreise und Kulturschichten in Südamerika, 1023.

[140] Viagem, 409.

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pushed the ceremonial lance into the ground in their midst and in a speech admonished them to be orderly and obedient.

At nightfall the pepyé of the atụ'k moiety, using the path outside the house circle, dispersed to their several huts; but the pepyé of the kạ' moiety waited until daybreak, since night belongs to the atụ'k and the daytime to the kạ'.

Before sunrise all pepyé received through the fence of their yard enormous gourd bottles specially made and filled with water by their kinswomen on the previous evening. With this they washed themselves for the first time since their capture. Henceforth the ablutions, which are designed to promote rapid growth recur twice daily.

The monkeys' visit.—On June 21, at 5:30 P.M., the wakõ'kama and the unofficial class of the as yet uninitiated pạntụ'ktĩkama boys assembled in the plaza with half a dozen young wantons. They painted their bodies black, drew wide, black horizontal stripes above the eyes, and tied bast tails with spirally coiled ends to the back of their belts, thus simulating monkeys (kukóe). Suddenly they hurled themselves on all fours, and thus sped in a dense troop along the radial path to the eastern leader's house of retreat. Crying like monkeys, grimacing and gesticulating, they took the yard by storm, some climbing the lofty fence with truly simian agility, while others broke through it. In every yard food had been deposited in readiness for them, and they at once took it along. After wildly carrying on their antics in the first house, the whole mad four-legged company rushed to the next, and so on from the west northward round the entire circle. When this performance was over two "nocturnal monkeys" (*Aotus trivirgatus*, Humboldt) appeared in the dark and also received some food. The pepyé remained in their cells hidden from the monkeys throughout the whole of this act.

Inspection of pepyé.—On July 12 all the men whose sisters' sons were in the pepyé seclusion, assembled in the plaza, ranging themselves by plaza groups. When all were present, the six companies amid loud shouting, suddenly dashed off simultaneously, each to the retreat of some member's nephew. Invading the yard by way of the fence, they took up positions in front of the rear door of the cell. The novice's uncle stepped ahead of the others and uttered three loud and piercing yells, whereupon the boy called came crawling out of the tiny exit. No sooner had he appeared, however, than his uncle bawled at him anew, chasing him in again. In this fashion each plaza group treated all the affiliated pepyé, then they returned to their plaza stations and withdrew after a given signal.

Notwithstanding the lightning rapidity of this inspection, everyone was bound to be impressed with the physical transformation of the novices during their three months' internment. With only a few exceptions they had grown perceptibly stouter and their skin, unaffected by either sunshine or paint, often displayed amazingly light tints.

Suspension of internment.—Two days later, on July 14, long before daybreak, the catcher continually made his circuit, uttering his hinkõ' cry. The pepyé, on the other hand, painted themselves from head to foot with the yellow pigment from the urucú root. On this background they then added in red urucú paint, the lines identifying them as kạ' or atụ'k, respectively.

At 5:30 A.M. the scene of the catcher and the wakõ'kama performed on the afternoon of May 27 was repeated: the former, running back and forth, conducted the class to the retreat of the eastern leader, whom he pulled out by his hair. At once the novice's uncle approached, screaming at his nephew to keep still, that he himself had experienced the same treatment in his day and had gladly submitted to it. In

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In these huts the members loafed much of the day with their girl associates, who prepared the collected food, painted them, romped with them, and for the most part were not averse to a bit of philandering.[288] The teprâti, however, bitterly complained that Kahęrkwę'i, one of their two associates, was extraordinarily unaccommodating, would deprecate love affairs, and simply ran off when the members would not leave her alone. Thereupon they went to the council and begged for the appointment of a substitute, so Kahęrkwę'i was superseded by Ačukwę'i, who is considered a veritable gem in point of amiability. As a member of this company I spent much time in the hut and was able to observe all of this episode at close range

Eight days later the Clowns again indulged in mad pranks. Secretly assembling near the village, in the woods by the bank of a stream, they put on their grass ornaments, that is, bandoleers, wristlets, knee bands, cravat, and forehead band with two erect brushlike tassels and long temple fringes, all of burity bast. Moreover, each Clown made for himself a pole 2 to 3 m. long; it had poker-work designs and a grass tassel below the tip. The two girl associates whom they had meanwhile selected were decorated with falcon down. Besides their cord girdles with short leaf apron, they wore forehead bands, wristlets, and bandoleers like the men's; also they were decorated with false queues over a meter in length, which except for the enormous terminal tassel were wrapped with bast and hung down to their calves. Their bandoleers resembled those of the precentresses, but were coarsely plaited of bast and had huge bast tassels.

The Clowns usually choose ex-vų'tę' for their girls, conducting them from their homes with absurd antics. But at the time of the last performance witnessed, one of these women had recently been delivered of a child, so the members substituted a young married woman named Kąyarí. A jolly lass, she compensated for the shortcomings of the other associate, the ex-vų'tę' Repíya, who somewhat resembled the above-mentioned Kahęrkwę'i in disposition, so that she was little qualified for the part of a Clowns' companion.

For sheer mischief one of the men could not refrain from putting on a girl's leaf apron, producing the same effect as a civilized man would in a woman's clothes. I explicitly emphasize that this was pure buffoonery and in no way betokened a "berdache." By way of contrast to this "bashful" Clown, another sheathed his penis in a long, slightly curved *Lagenaria* tied on so as to form a phallus 30 cm. in length.

However, the main decorative piece of this company was a female doll 60 cm in height and carved from the pith of the burity. Its face was painted with urucú, and the figure wore beaded cords around the neck, chest, wrists, and knee joints. Kąyarí acted the part of the doll's mother.

In the afternoon the Clowns suddenly marched into the village and went to their hut, where they presently enacted a series of extravagant family scenes, such as I had fortunately never witnessed in real life among the Rąmkõ'kamekra.

First, the doll's "kin" furiously attacked and beat up the "mother" for maltreatment of her child, whom she was accused of having thrown down and otherwise abused. Others took the mother's part, and she herself was not backward in vigorously defending herself, most disrespectfully dragging an old Clown along the ground by one of his legs. There ensued a scene of adultery. One Clown conducted the "mother" behind the hut, where both lay down and simulated cohabitation. Another man arrived and relieved the first. Then the transgression was discovered, precipitating a first-rate row. Finally, the "mother" devotedly sat down, took up her "child," and "nursed" it.

[288] According to earlier notes, one of the male members put food into the girls' mouths.

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SINK; BATHING SCENE